14 Stars!! 20 Hits!! of GOSPEL GREATS

☆ The Five Blind Boys of Alabama
☆ The Gospel Harmonettes
☆ Shirley Caesar
☆ Swan Silvertones
☆ James Cleveland
☆ The Institutional Choir
☆ The Meditation Singers
☆ Plus Seven More....

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5. MEETIN' TONIGHT — James Cleveland
6. WELL DONE — Rev. Charles Taylor
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9. WHEN TROUBLE COMES (Stretch Out) — The Institutional Choir
10. LOVE OF GOD — James Cleveland
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12. STAND UP — The Cross Jordan Singers
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14. I'M GLAD I FOUND JESUS — Shirley Caesar
15. THE LORD IS BLESSING ME — The Northeastern District Choir
16. I'M TRYING LORD — The Gospel Harmonettes
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THE ROOT OF ALL SOUL

CLARA WARD

A Long Look Back

During the '30s and '40s songwriters like Thomas Dorsey, Lucie Campbell, Kenneth Morris, and Roberta Martin began touring the country, performing their own compositions. These newer songs accommodated blues and jazz sounds to conventional Gospel lyrics and melodies. Roberta Martin and Sallie Martin . . . toured the country with their respective groups, training young singers to perform the new material. Meanwhile, such gifted soloists as Rosetta Tharpe, Ernestine Washington, and Georgia Peach had acquired a cult reputation among whites. By 1940 the newer songs and stylings had achieved national circulation. (From "The Gospel Truth" By Charles Hobson)

MAHALIA JACKSON

By AL RUTLEDGE

Charles Hobson should have listened when Ray Charles explained that "Jazz ain't nothing but soul."

Had he, his "The Gospel Truth" would have successfully convinced us that "Soul ain't nothing but the Gospel."

This isn't to say that Mr. Hobson failed in this important work in which he defended Gospel's rightful position as the Earthmother of the contemporary Soul-Rock Sound.

But his method was much like whipping the child to prove the mother right.

British

The Gospel unlike Rhythm and Blues, the Blues, and Jazz has not been invaded by white musicians. Even the advocates of the bold new experimental-popular-music (which holds nothing sacred) are seemingly content to copy or study only the expatriates of Gospel.

Young British musicians were the first whites to express enough musical genius and guts to venture into the bluesidism with any sense of real dedication.

The Rolling Stones and the Beatles make no bones in admitting that the major forces which influenced them were Muddy Waters, Leadbelly, and the likes of B. B. King or T-Bone Walker.

But why stop there?

Holiness

If the nitty gritty has any real meaning to the true artist surely it's what white, John Mayall, of the Blues Breakers, means when he described his venture into blues: "It grows; it mushrooms. One artist I'd find out about would lead me to finding out about another."

But where does it all end?

Where it began, in the Holiness and Baptist churches. In indescribable beauty of Mahalia Jackson's astounding rendition of "How I Got Over," or James Cleveland's tender "Peace Be Still."

This is the gourd from which it all flows. This is the Gospel. Black people shouting and singing praises to the Lord.

An emotion transformed to music.

Prayer

But even that isn't the whole of it for in its purest sense a Gospel song is a sermon; a conversation between man and God; a prayer.

"The point is," insists Hobson, "that nothing in Soul (music) can match the best in Gospel. . . ."

The truth is that everything in Soul is derived from the Gospel.

One need only look to those former Gospel singers who are the major soul singers of today: Aretha Franklin, Ray Charles, Dionne Warwick and Lou Rawls.

Or yesterday's greats: Sam Cooke, Dinah Washington, Della Reese. Each of these people in his or her own way helped to pioneer the Soul Sound.

Lyrical

And more important each is as much a product of the church and his singing style as much a product of the Gospel as the tambourine.

It was the Gospel which formed their styles and the only significant change made when they converted to Rhythm and Blues was lyrical rather than basic.

One could hardly deny that Sam Cooke's style, phrasing, and delivery while singing "A Change's Gonna Come" is the same as his singing of "If I Could Touch The Hem Of His Garment?"

Individual preferences aside, whether its Rev. Alex Bradford setting a chruch on fire or Ray Charles destoying a night club audience, the difference is in the content rather than the quality.

Sensual

If the Gospel lyric is filled with a spiritual love and addresses itself to things holy the soul lyric is earthy, and clearly sensual. Its whole message is the relationship between man and woman where the Gospel is concerned with man and God.

Gospel is essentially "... black folk's music," says Hobson and he's right. Unlike Jazz, which white professors took to famed halls of learning such as Juliard, the Gospel, is indigenous to the store front church, the slum, or the kitchen of a share-croppers shack.

Most great Gospel singers literally grew up in the church and learned to master their art without formal musical knowledge, which made it difficult for those with commercial interests to tap its talent.

Pop-Gospel

It may be a matter of pure coincidence that the Clara Ward Singers call what they do Pop-Gospel singing but the important thing is that they don't even change the lyrics for the night club and concert performances.

They perform exactly as if they were in church.

This significantly points up the difficulty in making the Gospel-Soul distinction in terms of divorcing the two.

Top notch soul writers and performers draw heavily on Gospel themes and techniques.

There is a universal agreement that soul music has to be moving; its supposed to make you feel like dancing in the streets.

It naturally follows to attain this end at the root of all soul is the most moving cadences and rhythms in music: The Gospel.

THEY TOO SANG THE GOSPEL

Dionne Warwick

Ray Charles

Aretha Franklin

Lou Rawls

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NEW JERSEY
AFRO-AMERICAN
RICHMOND
AFRO-AMERICAN
BALTIMORE
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